

EDWARD R. ROYCE, CALIFORNIA
CHAIRMAN

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, NEW JERSEY
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA
DANA ROHRBACHER, CALIFORNIA
STEVE CHABOT, OHIO
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA
MICHAEL T. McCAUL, TEXAS
TED POE, TEXAS
MATT SALMON, ARIZONA
TOM MARINO, PENNSYLVANIA
JEFF DUNCAN, SOUTH CAROLINA
ADAM KINZINGER, ILLINOIS
MO BROOKS, ALABAMA
TOM COTTON, ARKANSAS
PAUL COOK, CALIFORNIA
GEORGE HOLDING, NORTH CAROLINA
RANDY K. WEBER SR., TEXAS
SCOTT PERRY, PENNSYLVANIA
STEVE STOCKMAN, TEXAS
RON DeSANTIS, FLORIDA
TREY RADEL, FLORIDA
DOUG COLLINS, GEORGIA
MARK MEADOWS, NORTH CAROLINA
TED S. YOHIO, FLORIDA
LUKE MESSER, INDIANA

AMY PORTER
CHIEF OF STAFF

THOMAS SHEEHY
STAFF DIRECTOR



One Hundred Thirteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, AMERICAN SAMOA
BRAD SHERMAN, CALIFORNIA
GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York
ALBIO SIREES, New Jersey
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, VIRGINIA
THEODORE E. DEUTCH, FLORIDA
BRIAN HIGGINS, New York
KAREN BASS, CALIFORNIA
WILLIAM KEATING, MASSACHUSETTS
DAVID CICILLINE, RHODE ISLAND
ALAN GRAYSON, FLORIDA
JUAN VARGAS, CALIFORNIA
BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER, ILLINOIS
JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III, MASSACHUSETTS
AMI BERA, CALIFORNIA
ALAN S. LOWENTHAL, CALIFORNIA
GRACE MENG, New York
LOIS FRANKEL, FLORIDA
TULSI GABBARD, HAWAII
JOAQUIN CASTRO, TEXAS

JASON STEINBAUM
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

August 2, 2013

General Martin Dempsey
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
9999 Joint Staff Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20318-9999

Dear General Dempsey:

After reviewing your July 19th letter to Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Levin outlining options for the use of U.S. military force in the Syrian conflict, I am writing to request further clarification regarding the possible use of limited stand-off strikes.

Specifically, your letter states that conducting limited stand-off strikes targeting "high-value regime air defense, air, ground, missile, and naval forces as well as the supporting military facilities and command nodes" would require "hundreds of aircraft, ships, submarines, and other enablers" and that "the costs would be in the billions."

While I do not profess to be a military expert, it is clear that this analysis does not fully reflect an even more limited option that some have advocated, which would involve cruise missile or other stand-off weapon strikes on regime-controlled air bases.

While a more limited strike of this nature would not degrade the regime's military capabilities to the same extent as the option outlined in your letter, it could help prevent the Assad regime from using aircraft against innocent civilians and members of the opposition that the Administration has decided to train and arm. It could also help reduce the flow of arms from Iran, Russia and others that continue to assist the Assad regime.

It stands to reason that this even more limited stand-off strike option would come at lower cost to taxpayers than the options outlined in your letter, and could be accomplished with fewer military assets. Most importantly, it would not involve putting any US boots on the ground or in Syrian airspace.

As Congress continues to consider the pros and cons of U.S. military involvement in the Syria conflict -- which has resulted in more than 100,000 deaths, generated millions of refugees and

General Martin Dempsey
The Pentagon
August 2, 2013

internally displaced persons, and increasingly threatens to destabilize the entire region -- I respectfully request that you provide me with additional information regarding the force requirements and estimated costs associated with a more limited stand-off strike option focused on degrading regime-controlled air bases.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eliot L. Engel", with a stylized flourish at the end.

ELIOT L. ENGEL
Ranking Member